

CORRESPONDENCE

"The Inheritance of Blindness"—Corrigendum

To the Editor, Eugenics Review

SIR,—On page 117 of the July *EUGENICS REVIEW* the words "Congenital defects (6 per cent.)" were unfortunately left out in error. The sentence should have read: "My chief concern here, however, is with those types of blindness which are strictly hereditary—congenital defects (6 per cent.), glaucoma (1 per cent.), extreme myopia (14 per cent.), senile cataract (1 per cent.), and other types (2 per cent.)—a total of 24 per cent., or practically one quarter of all forms of blindness."

J. MYLES BICKERTON.

Eugenic Family Endowment.

To the Editor, Eugenics Review

SIR,—The aim of the scheme is to abolish the financial bonus on childless marriages and on marriages with less than three children. To do this fully, it would also be necessary to grade the Death Duties in such a way that an only child would receive one-third of the parent's fortune, the remainder to be seized by the State. A three-child marriage would pay no Death Duties.

It is to be feared that the prospect of the loss of two-thirds of a fortune to the State would lead to wholesale evasion. If not evaded, the loss of capital would lead to disorganization of trade if large fortunes were involved. Nevertheless, some adjustment on these lines should be included in the scheme outlined.

I further suggest that an age limit for contributions to the pool should be fixed, say at 60 years. Normally, children are not a financial burden to parents who have lived to 60.*

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Sun Bathing and Amentia

To the Editor, Eugenics Review

SIR,—There is not much to quarrel with in your notice (on page 86 of the July number) of a circular received from the Sun Bathing Society. The statement which you brand as "hysterical propaganda," that sun-bathing or active air-bathing would reduce the number of the mentally defective, is not one which I would venture to make myself. At the same time it seems to me possible that it is not as absurd as at first

[* It has for long been the general opinion among eugenicists that the present death duties should be replaced by some such scheme of inheritance duties.—ED.]

sight it appears to you, resting as it does on two assumptions which I would regard as neither proved nor disproved. The first is that freer contact with the sun and air fits women's constitutions to bear children more easily. The fact that birth is actually easier among the less-clothed races, though far from conclusive, has some bearing on this claim. The second is that (to quote Dr. Bernard Hollander's words) "cranial injuries during the birth of an infant can cause feeble-mindedness." Knowing my own ignorance of the subject, I take no side in the discussion now in progress in the *EUGENICS REVIEW*; but the mere fact that this question is being debated in your columns makes it out of place to rule out the possibility that Dr. Hollander's contention may be right.

Nudism, though you class it with sun-bathing, goes very far in its psychological effect beyond the mild form of light-cult which we advocated in our letter to *The Times*. Does that psychological effect concern Eugenics at all? Very decidedly so. Reproductive selection of some sort is unceasingly at work for good or ill: the aim of Eugenics is to purify the basis of selection, so that it may result in upward rather than downward evolution; and this applies no less to Sexual Selection than to the complicated varieties or travesties of Natural Selection which operate in a modern civilized community. Now look at the world you live in, with its debased standards of Sexual Selection and its painted and powdered women angling for masculine favour with the bait of expensive clothes and cosmetics. We may well hope that our descendants will be privileged to live in a freer and saner world, where they may meet each other as God made them and not as their tailors have disguised them—and meet too in the natural and healthy atmosphere which outlaws all the petty lusts and fears that embarrass their morbidly sex-conscious ancestors. And if that comes about, who can doubt that they will choose their mates by a purer, truer and holier standard of beauty than we poor prisoners, whose souls and minds are as clogged and shrouded, as darkened and choked, by creeds and conventions as our bodies are by wool and felt and starch? I suggest to you therefore that it will be of real eugenic value when we can win our liberation from these heavy draperies that shut out from our minds the fresh draught of independent thought, and that screen our souls and bodies from the divine light which Heaven pours out day by day to save us from our padded dinginess.

W. HOPE-JONES.

[As our note indicated, the *Eugenics Society* is seriously interested in the bearing of nudism upon sex education.—ED.]